

## **South Bank Academies**

### **Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy**

#### **1. Policy Statement**

South Bank Academies (SBA) and our schools South Bank University Academy (SBUA) and South Bank University Sixth Form (SBUSixth) aims to be a welcoming, inclusive place all who learn, work or use our services. We believe in respect for everyone; we want to develop our community by valuing diversity and advancing equality.

Our aim is to ensure that everyone who works and learns at South Bank Academies achieves their full potential in an inclusive environment free from discrimination. This is regardless of age, race, gender, disability (including mental health), sexual orientation, marriage and civil partnership, gender reassignment or identity, pregnancy and maternity, religion and belief, nationality, family circumstances, economic and social background, union activity, and employment status.

The Trust and its schools will promote equality of access for all those involved in the educational process. The Trust is located in an area reflecting the full diversity of the London population and attracts students with wide ranging learning, social, economic and ethnic differences. The Academy seeks to create a community in which everyone, without exception, is respected, valued and happy. Striving to ensure that the work environment is free from harassment and bullying and that everyone is treated with dignity and respect is an important aspect of ensuring equal opportunities in employment.

#### **2. Scope**

This policy applies to all members of the Trust, including governors, staff, students and people using our services. The policy is also binding on our external contractors, employers and other partners with whom the Trust collaborates. Unless otherwise stated, all references to staff include potential employees, former employees, full-time and part-time employees, as well as sessional workers, agency workers, temporary workers and contractors.

#### **3. Public Sector Equality Duty**

The main reason for adopting an Equal Opportunities Policy is to identify, prevent and redress unfair discrimination against disadvantaged groups. The Equal Opportunities Policy will assist the governing body to address legal, managerial and social issues from the basis of a statement of commitment to equality supported by a more detailed policy and procedures for implementation.

The Equality Act 2010 replaced all previous discrimination law. It has simplified the law and extends protection from discrimination in some areas.

School and Colleges must adhere to the following:

- Protection against discrimination is extended to pupils who are pregnant or who have recently given birth, and pupils who are undergoing gender reassignment
- It is now unlawful for employers to ask health related questions of applicants before job offer, unless the questions are specifically related to an intrinsic function of the work.

- New positive action provisions will allow schools to target disadvantage experienced by pupils with particular protected characteristics
- It is now unlawful to victimise a pupil for anything done in relation to the Act by a sibling or parent
- The Act will extend the reasonable adjustments duty to require schools to provide auxiliary aids and services to disabled pupils
- The previous specific duties on schools have been combined into the new Public Sector Equality Duties (PSED)
- There is a requirement to have an Access Plan to improve access for disabled pupils

#### **4. Protected characteristics:**

It is unlawful for a school or college to discriminate by treating individuals less favourably because of their:

- Sex
- Race
- Disability
- Religion or belief
- Sexual orientation
- Gender reassignment
- Pregnancy/maternity
- Marriage and Civil Partnership

Children and young people under the age of 18 have limited protection under the Age characteristic. It is lawful to treat people differently because of their age in circumstances where the law allows, or requires, people to be treated differently because of their age. Equality of opportunity and non-discrimination extends to the treatment of all members of the college community.

#### **5. Aims to eradicate discrimination**

We believe that a greater level of success from students and staff can be achieved by realising the uniqueness of individuals. Creating a prejudice-free environment where individuals feel confident and at ease is a commitment of SBA. This environment will be achieved by:

- Being respectful
- Always treating all members of the college community fairly
- Developing an understanding of diversity and the benefits it can have
- Adopting an inclusive attitude
- Adopting an inclusive curriculum that is accessible to all
- Encouraging compassion and open-mindedness

SBA is committed to having a balanced and fair curriculum. We believe that our students should be exposed to ideas and concepts that may challenge their understanding, to help ensure that students learn to become more accepting and inclusive of others. Challenging controversial concepts will be delivered in a way that prevents discrimination and promotes inclusive attitudes.

The Trust endeavours to promote positive relationships with parents and carers, governors and members of the wider community. Equality of opportunity cannot be realised without the involvement and commitment of all members of the Trust community and a common understanding of the pivotal role of equal opportunities in the context of ethos and the Trust's values, in particular, the recognition that the role of all employees is crucial in the delivery of the objectives of the policy.

We expect all our employees to act in a non-discriminating manner and be mindful to avoid actions that will be deemed as harassment in the services we provide to the public and our wider community. It is unlawful to fail to make reasonable adjustments to overcome barriers to using services caused by disability. The duty to make reasonable adjustments includes the removal, adaptation or alteration of physical features, if these physical features make it impossible or unreasonably difficult for disabled people to make use of services. In addition, the Trust, as service providers of children and young people, has an obligation to think ahead and address any barriers that may impede disabled people from having access to services we provide.

## **6. Dealing with prejudice**

SBA will not tolerate any form of prejudice-related incidents. We will not tolerate any forms of violence and abuse, whether physical or verbal, that is directed to any of our staff, volunteers or students.

Our students are taught to be:

- Understanding of others
- Celebratory of cultural and religious diversity
- Eager to reach their full potential
- Inclusive
- Aware of what constitutes discriminatory behaviour

Trust employees will:

- Promote diversity and equality
- Encourage and adopt an inclusive attitude
- Lead by example

Trust employees will not:

- Discriminate against any member of the Trust community
- Treat other members of the Trust community unfairly

**Review Date:** March 2026

**Next Review:** March 2028

## **Appendix 1: South Bank University Sixth Form**

### **Collecting and analysing equality information for pupils**

SBUSixth is an inclusive provider. We aim to use the curriculum and learning to encourage all individuals to fulfil their potential. We collect and analyse the following equality information for our students on an annual basis:

- Attainment levels
- Attendance levels
- Exclusions
- Behaviour incidents
- Gender
- Race
- Disability
- Ethnicity
- EAL (English as an additional language)
- SEND support
- Disadvantaged
- Looked after children

### **7. Collecting and analysing equality information regarding employment**

SBUSixth is committed in providing a working environment free from discrimination, victimisation and harassment where staff are valued for their ability and skill to provide the best opportunities for students. We aim to recruit an appropriately qualified workforce that is representative of all sectors of the community in which we work. We collect the following profile information for our staff on an annual basis:

- Gender
- Occupational group
- Disability
- Religion
- Race
- Ethnicity
- Pay
- Staff pregnancy

### **8. Equality objectives**

Following review and analysis, the following equality objectives have been identified:

- To seek to close the gaps in attainment and achievement for all groups of students, especially students with special educational needs and disabilities, looked after children and students from minority ethnic groups.

- To monitor and promote the involvement of all groups of students in the extra-curricular life of the college, including leadership opportunities, especially for students with special educational needs.
- To promote cultural understanding, awareness and tolerance of different beliefs and lifestyles.
- To promote mental health awareness for staff and students
- Proactively work towards eradicating any incidence of the use of homophobic, sexist and racist language by all people in the sixth form community.

## **Appendix 2: South Bank Universities Academy**

### **Implementation of Equal Opportunities at South Bank University Academy**

South Bank Academies (as employer), the Board of Governors and SBUA Leadership Team must:

- Carry out its legal duty in complying with the relevant legislation (including *The Sex Discrimination Act, Race Relations Act, Disability Discrimination Act and Employment Equality Regulations*)
- Endeavour to assess candidates objectively for employment and promotion against the requirements for the job, taking account of any reasonable adjustments that may be required for candidates with a disability. Disability and personal or home commitments will not form the basis of employment decisions except where necessary
- Comply with its obligations in relation to statutory requests for contract variations and will also make reasonable adjustments to its standard working practices to overcome barriers caused by disability
- Reinforce the Academy's position as a provider of high quality education and as a good employer providing development opportunities
- Ensure that equality remains high on the Academy's strategic agenda
- Establish good people management practices in which discrimination is recognised as an organisational issue which needs an organisational response.
- Work towards an employee and governing body that reflects the composition of the wider community
- Ensure all employees work together with a shared sense of purpose to meet the needs of every student
- Ensure that students and employees contribute towards a happy and caring environment by showing respect for, and appreciation of, one another as individuals
- Enhance and develop the skills, knowledge and abilities of existing employees to realise their full potential, irrespective of background or employment status.
- Provide equal access to training and development opportunities for all employees, including those who work part-time, on the basis of their assessed training needs.
- Promote greater awareness of equal opportunities and the contribution which employees, governors, parents or carers and students can make.
- Equip employees with the skills to provide personal and organisational solutions, to recognise discriminatory practices and behaviour and to promote anti-discriminatory behaviour generally
- Ensure that complaints or evidence of failure to comply with Academy's Equal Opportunities Policy will be dealt with promptly and fully investigated according to the relevant procedure (e.g. complaints relating to employees may be investigated either under the disciplinary, grievance or anti-harassment procedure as appropriate).

### **Role of the Head of Department including Heads of Year**

The Leadership Team are accountable for the Academy curriculum and line management. The Heads of Department and Heads of Year are responsible for ensuring that appropriate arrangements are put in place to monitor the performance of potentially disadvantaged learners. Measures in place include:

- Identifying and investigating any patterns with regard to exclusions and poor attendance / punctuality in respect of particular groups
- Monitoring differences in student attitudes to work (particularly of those with protected characteristics) and towards each other with a view to identifying any significant patterns and issues

- Addressing issues such as sexual or racial harassment, bullying and hostile behaviour and ensuring that there are effective procedures for reporting and responding to such incidents
- Ensuring that the performance of different groups of students is monitored and evaluated so that the particular needs of different students are as well as evaluating the impact of additional support on achieving standards.

### **Role of the Leadership Team**

- To provide strategies to implement a rise in performance, aspirations and self-esteem of potentially disadvantaged learners.
- To provide a curriculum which strengthens our values of social justice, community and empathy.
- To provide employees development to raise awareness of differences in need and to promote strategies to raise achievement in all learners
- To provide an environment that creates, affirms and supports ethnic, cultural, religious and social diversity and effectively promotes good personal, community and race relations.

### **Expectations of Employees**

- Employees share a responsibility to challenge a student, parent or carer or colleague who behaves in a discriminatory way and encourage them to exhibit more appropriate attitudes or behaviour
- Anti-discriminatory practice involves the examination of our personal values, beliefs, attitudes and expectations to ensure that we work proactively to give equality of opportunity to all learners, parents or carers and colleagues at all times
- Employees should provide extra-curricular activities and events that cater for the interests and capabilities of all students and take account of parental concerns related to religion and culture
- For employees to work in an anti-discriminatory way we need to have knowledge of relevant equal opportunities legislation and what this means for our practices and Academy policies
- Parents or carers of students have a right to a genuine commitment by the Academy to concepts and practices that underpin equal rights legislation and policies and the avoidance of tokenistic behaviour.
- The promotion of equality of opportunity involves respect for all people and valuing their individuality and personal circumstances. It also involves encouraging and fostering a positive learning environment
- To provide a broad and balanced curriculum that is designed to meet the diverse needs of students in curriculum design, subject options and pedagogy so that every learner can succeed
- All employees will ensure that curriculum resources reflect and celebrate diversity
- The pastoral care implications require monitoring and supporting the progress and development of all students irrespective of prior learning attainment and background
- Employees are vigilant towards those from minority groups or with disabilities, medical conditions or other special educational needs. In specific circumstances, making special arrangements for students with protected characteristics is appropriate
- Employees who commit serious acts of harassment may also be guilty of a criminal offence. Acts of discrimination, harassment, bullying or victimisation against employees or parents or carers and their families are disciplinary offences and will be dealt with under the Academy's disciplinary procedure. Discrimination, harassment, bullying or victimisation may constitute gross misconduct and could lead to dismissal without notice.

## **Expectations for Students at South Bank University Academy**

### **Disability**

- The Academy will make whatever arrangements are reasonable and practical within financial constraints to ensure that disabled learners can gain access to the curriculum
- The Academy will work effectively with local services and agencies to provide integrated support.

### **Gender**

- Curriculum materials and pedagogy reasonably reflect a gender balance and extend aspirations and opportunities
- Guidance is given on subject choices and careers so as to encourage students to consider non-stereotypical opportunities
- Gender issues are considered when preparing for, and following up, work experience and other work-related learning and to take account of positive role models such as employees, guest speakers and representatives in the promotion of specific gender initiatives.

### **Ethnic, indigenous, refugees, religious or any other group who may be considered as a minority within our Academy community have:**

- Effective induction arrangements
- Effective home-Academy liaison links made to strengthen our partnership with parents or carers directly in their child's education
- Cultural and linguistic diversity recognised and celebrated
- Essential information translated into a community language when possible or necessary
- Links established with local communities and their leaders
- Effective interventions for ethnic minority and students who are early-stage English:
  - As an Additional Language learners
  - For students from traveller communities, appropriate support to enable them to achieve their best.
- Programme of spiritual, moral, social and cultural education with appropriate information and resources and student names accurately recorded and as far as possible pronounced correctly. We expect students to respect the names from cultures or socio-economic groups other than their own.
- Disadvantaged including Pupil Premium and Free School Meals:
- Where evidence is provided that a student is entitled to have access to a balanced free school meal at lunch time
- Full admittance to extension and core extracurricular activities independent of cost
- Raise low aspirations in order to encourage social mobility.

### **Sexual orientation and reassignment, the Academy will:**

- Ensure no-one within the Academy or using its services experiences discrimination or harassment
- Ensure employees have received training on equality issues concerning sexual orientation
- Broaden representation in the Academy to reflect society
- Ensure services take into account difference and diversity are accessible to all who need them

## **Monitoring and Evaluation**

Each student's progress is tracked to monitor gaps in attainment and participation. The resulting data is analysed in respect of disability and special educational needs; gender; where prior attainment may be different from national norms; minority ethnic and students who use English as an additional language; students of different sexual orientation or family grouping; for students who are looked after or young carers; and students who live in low socioeconomic households.